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REPORTS TO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Draft report

UNDP report

1. The Administrator introduced the report to the Economic and Social Council for UNDP (DP/1998/14). He noted that it was prepared in a common format, jointly agreed upon by UNDP, UNFPA, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme (WFP). The report came at a particularly important time as 1998 would be a determining year with regard to the functioning of UNDP as well as to the nature and level of operational activities for development of the United Nations system as a whole. The triennial comprehensive policy review was under preparation, an exercise that would lead to Economic and Social Council and General Assembly resolutions evaluating the performance of UNDP and setting the strategy for United Nations development operations in the years to come. The report also highlighted the challenges UNDP, as all other development organizations, must face as it pursued its broad mandate in poverty eradication at a time when multilateral resources for development were declining.

2. He noted that the length of the report was constrained by Executive Board requirements and also that detailed information on the subjects covered in the report would be available in the annual report of the Administrator, to be submitted at the annual session 1998.

3. The triennial comprehensive policy review was currently in a state of advanced preparation and represented an opportunity to assess in detail many of the issues arising from operational activities that had been informally raised by Member States, including at the Economic and Social Council. UNDP had responded in detail to the questionnaires of the review and was collaborating with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs in the preparation of the report to the Council and to the General Assembly. The

Administrator emphasized that the starting point for the review should be the Secretary-General's reform programme as endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 52/12 A and B.

4. The Administrator gave an overview of three areas for discussion in connection with the report to the Economic and Social Council: the United Nations presence at the country level; the United Nations Development Assistance Framework; and funding issues.

5. The Secretary-General's reform had been instrumental in strengthening the United Nations presence at the country level through the resident coordinator system pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 48/209, 47/199 and 50/120. Discussions among the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) members and its Executive Committee were proceeding with regard to strengthening the resident coordinator system. As manager and funder of the resident coordinator system, and in view of the legislated link between the UNDP Resident Representative and the Resident Coordinator, as reaffirmed by the Secretary-General, UNDP was pursuing, with other programmes and funds, policies and concrete measures to strengthen the overall resident coordinator system. Measures in that respect included: widening the pool of qualified candidates (in the preceding year 11 out of 35 persons selected as resident coordinators had come from organizations other than UNDP); more specific competency assessments and appraisal methodologies; and comprehensive strategies to expand common premises and services.

6. UNDP had embarked, with the other UNDG members, on 18 pilot United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAFs). The first joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNDP/UNFPA and UNICEF had been held in January 1998 to look at the pilot UNDAF experience of Viet Nam. An informal joint meeting to follow-up on the January meeting would be held during the present session of the Board. One issue that had arisen at the first regular session was the need for more work in streamlining programming instruments of various funds and programmes, with the overall aim of beginning the UNDAF at the start of a common programming cycle. Greater streamlining in the process was needed. UNDP believed that national ownership was essential to ensure conformity with the priorities of programme countries in which all United Nations system activities were anchored. A review of the UNDAF pilot process would commence in July 1998.

7. While the issue of funding was not discussed in detail in the report to the Economic and Social Council, the important process under the leadership of the Executive Board should be noted. The Open-Ended Ad Hoc Working Group was a very important mechanism in forging and intensifying the partnership with traditional and emerging donors, programme countries, the Secretariat and the Executive Board.

8. The Administrator noted that UNDP had continued to collaborate closely with the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS and at the country level, the capacity of the resident coordinator system was strengthened to support an expanded response to the epidemic. Increased funding and further mainstreaming was needed for enhanced normative and operational activities relating to HIV/AIDS.

9. On the follow-up to global conferences, in response to the Economic and Social Council resolution 1997/6, the Administrator pointed out that the inter-agency task forces created by the Administrative Committee on Coordination had served to encourage inter-agency teams at the country level, working under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator. As the task forces had been replaced by less formal networking arrangements, the UNDAF was essential to retaining their momentum. The global conferences had produced a profound effect on UNDP, including making poverty eradication the overriding objective of UNDP work. The fusion of normative arrangements at the global level had played a role in guiding the country cooperation frameworks (CCFs) as well as the UNDAF pilot exercises.

Discussion

10. Many delegations took the floor to comment on the report. They thanked the Administrator for his opening remarks, which provided analysis and information additional to the report. Most speakers encouraged UNDP to include more analysis, including charts and figures, and less description in future reports to the Economic and Social Council. The report should highlight the major points on which the Council could provide advice as well as identify problems. One delegation emphasized that the reports should help to enable progress in poverty eradication efforts in programme countries. Another delegation, supported by many others, requested that UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF prepare a consolidated list of actions on which the Council could provide advice to the funds and programmes for submission to the Council's 1998 substantive session. WFP could also be included in the exercise.

11. Several speakers welcomed the inclusion of information on the work of UNDG and on UNDAF in the report and Administrator's statement. The need to increase coordination, avoid overlap and ensure cost-effectiveness was emphasized. Further information on the differentiation among the programming instruments of the UNDAF, the country strategy note and the CCF was requested. United Nations specialized agencies must participate in the UNDAF process, according to many delegations. One delegation requested further information on the legal framework for the UNDG at the country level. Another underlined that the UNDAF should be under the leadership of the programme country and reflect ownership by that country. Information on how the sustainable human development mandate of UNDP fitted in with the mandates of UNFPA and UNICEF in the UNDAF process was requested. One delegation requested more information on the delays in implementing common services at the country level.

12. Measures taken to strengthen the resident coordinator system were welcomed. Those measures included the expansion of the pool of candidates for resident coordinator, including through staff secondments and enhanced selection and review criteria. A query was raised regarding the number of resident coordinators who came from other organizations in 1994 versus 1998 and how many women resident coordinators were currently serving. The issue of funding of the resident coordinator system would be discussed by the Economic and Social Council and during the triennial comprehensive policy review in the General Assembly. Several delegations commented on the funding and management of the resident coordinator system, with some suggesting that the costs for support of the system be shared among involved organizations. One delegation expressed

support for the continued designation of the UNDP Resident Representative as United Nations Resident Coordinator. Another delegation requested information on the designation of humanitarian coordinators who were different from the resident coordinator in a particular country.

13. One delegation, supported by another, requested systematic inclusion of sections on relations with the Bretton Woods institutions and on the preparations for participation in the humanitarian segment in future reports.

14. Many delegations expressed the view that concrete examples of lessons learned and good practices should have been included in the section on capacity-building and national execution, as well as with regard to the harmonization of programming cycles. Greater efforts were required to determine the common understanding of the definitions of capacity-building and national execution. Several delegations expressed their commitment to national execution. The need to refer to South-South cooperation in relation to national execution was mentioned by some speakers.

15. The emphasis on programme countries setting their own priorities was underlined by some delegations. The Organisation for Economic Cooperation for Development (OECD)/Development Assistance Committee (DAC) statement on "Development Partnerships in the New Global Context" (May 1995) was a useful reference in that regard.

16. The work to improve monitoring and evaluation activities was praised. However, more work was required in that area, in particular in relation to the CCFs, and with regard to updating current methods in light of the work of the UNDG. While enhanced project compliance was noted in some regions, others needed further efforts to increase compliance. Several speakers looked forward to receiving the evaluation compliance report at the annual session 1998. Queries were raised on progress in undertaking joint strategic evaluations and on the concept of rating of agencies mentioned on page 70 of the publication "Measuring and Managing Results: Lessons for Development Cooperation".

17. Several delegations expressed their support for UNDP funding of training activities held at the Staff College in Turin.

18. With reference to the cooperation of UNDP with civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations, one delegation questioned the reference contained in paragraph 58 of the document on the shift from representative to participatory democracy, stating that in his country's view that activity was outside of the domain of the Executive Board.

19. Comments from the secretariat on the progress of decentralized authority would be welcomed.

20. Some speakers asked for clarification of paragraph 44 of the document, stating that their delegations still had questions about the concept of multi-year contributions as a model for funding arrangements. One delegation requested that if reference to burden-sharing was included, then the report should also mention the possibility of maintaining voluntary funding

arrangements. Other measures could be explored, including through the private sector.

21. Progress in the follow-up to global conferences was noted by many delegations. One speaker requested further information on the degree to which resident coordinators were incorporating the programmes of action resulting from the conferences in country-level programming. Another speaker asked for information on the linkage and coordination of the work of the various inter-agency bodies on follow-up to conferences. One delegation requested further information on the "20/20" event in Hanoi and a copy of the report on social exclusion. Further references to the role of South-South cooperation in the follow-up to the World Summit on Social Development would be welcomed.

22. Some delegations stated that they were of the view that the contribution of UNDP to the field of human rights should emphasize the right to development and refer to work with programme countries in addressing poverty eradication. Speakers underlined the need for UNDP to avoid conditionality in its work.

23. Requests were made for more information on lessons learned from inter-agency cooperation in fighting the spread of HIV/AIDS.

24. Two delegations believed that the report should have included reference to the narrowing of the UNDP programme focus.

Response by the secretariat

25. The Administrator welcomed the proposal for a consolidated report by UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF to the Economic and Social Council.

26. With regard to the UNDAF process, he noted that United Nations specialized agencies were not yet formally participating in the process. The Administrative Committee on Coordination would need to agree formally on the inclusion of the specialized agencies in the UNDAF process. The linkage between the UNDAF and the resident coordinator system at the country level would need to be worked out. In response to a query, he stated that UNDP did not create country strategy notes in cases where the Government did not wish to have it. The CSN was a government-owned document and could be seen as representing the "demand side" of development cooperation whereas the UNDAF represented the supply-side response by the United Nations operational entities. The UNDAF was the equivalent of a UNDP advisory note, he stated, and could possibly replace that note at a future date. In response to a query, he noted that sustainable human development was an overarching concept that was applicable to most development assistance. He hoped that the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board could convene future joint meetings with the UNICEF Board as the UNDAF experience progressed.

27. In response to the comments made, he emphasized that resident coordinators did not want to be cut off from UNDP, which through its programme and administrative funding provided essential support for coordination. Seven resident coordinators had written to the Secretary-General on the necessity of having UNDP as an organizational base from which to operate the resident coordinator function. In response to the delegations who had suggested cost-sharing of the resident coordinator system, the Administrator stated that

cost-sharing of the support office at the country level would be welcomed as UNDP was currently responsible for funding the offices. However, UNDP had a mandate from the Secretary-General for funding and managing the resident coordinator system on behalf of the United Nations system. In line with that mandate, UNDP would need to continue to provide central funding for the resident coordinator to ensure the unity of management and funding as well as accountability.

28. The Administrator cited the following figures: of 131 resident coordinators, 11 out of 35 designated in 1997 were from organizations outside of UNDP, a figure which had resulted in the doubling of resident coordinators from outside the organization; 30 of the 131 resident coordinators were women; the goal for women resident coordinators was 40 per cent by the year 2001; 41 out of 131 resident coordinators had worked outside of UNDP in their careers; there were currently four United Nations houses - in Lebanon, Lesotho, Malawi and South Africa; and 30 other premises were virtually ready for designation as United Nations houses.

29. Inter-agency collaboration existed in the area of monitoring and evaluation, the Administrator noted, but strategic evaluations were needed. He expressed disappointment about the lack of progress in harmonization, an area that required greater encouragement from inter-governmental processes.

30. In response to the clarifications sought, the Administrator noted that the paper on multi-year funding referred to in paragraph 44 of the report had been requested by the office of the Secretary-General as an input from UNDP for the report of the Secretary-General to the Economic and Social Council on the financing of operational activities.

31. Progress had been seen on developing a common understanding of national execution and capacity-building. New guidelines for national execution had been developed through an inter-agency process. UNDP had contributed chapters on national execution and the programme approach to the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions manual on operational activities.

32. He noted that a full report on the dissemination of information to country offices regarding the follow-up to global conferences would be made available to the Executive Board at the present session. He informed the Board that at the special session of the Economic and Social Council in May, UNDP would make a special presentation on collaboration with the OECD/DAC, World Bank and United Nations in the development of indicators to monitor progress in meeting the goals of international conferences.

33. In response to the query raised, he noted that the concept of agency ratings mentioned in the joint UNDP/Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) publication "Measuring and Managing Results: Lessons for Development Cooperation" merely implied that if aid agencies had a uniform rating system for assessing their respective activities, it could provide a basis for comparing the performance of the assistance they provided in different fields. An upcoming headquarters and country-level workshop in Santo Domingo would examine the lessons of the report as they applied to UNDP.

34. With regard to the comments on the human rights policy document, he underlined that UNDP assistance was unconditional and that programme countries had the right to be free from poverty. He agreed that the humanitarian segment was a key part of the Economic and Social Council session, especially in the current year, when the linkage with development would be discussed. Progress in decentralization was also worth examining, he stated, noting that UNDP had decentralized most of its programming operations except for the approval of the CCF.

35. The Associate Administrator stated that UNDP would endeavour to incorporate the suggestions made by delegations at the present session in the report of the following year. He noted that the time-frame of some CCFs had been adjusted in order to enable harmonization of programming cycles among the funds and programmes. There had been some progress in harmonization with regard to the presentation of budget formats among the funds and programmes. Direct execution, he underlined, was an exception which occurred in countries in special development situations where rapid delivery was needed or where the Government had requested UNDP to take action.

[36. The Executive Board approved the following decision:]

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REPORTS TO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Draft report

(Continued)

1. In introducing the Report of the Executive Director to the Economic and Social Council (DP/FPA/1998/2), the Executive Director noted that the report had been prepared in the format jointly agreed to by UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA and the World Food Programme. The report covered a wide range of issues, including funding arrangements, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and integrated and coordinated implementation and follow-up of the major United Nations Conferences and summits. In response to a request of the Executive Board, the report included updated information on the work of UNFPA in the area of HIV/AIDS prevention.

2. The Executive Director underscored the Fund's strong commitment to the implementation of various General Assembly and Economic and Social Council resolutions and decisions of the Executive Board on operational activities, as well as the Fund's active participation in and commitment to the Secretary-General's programme of reform. With the support and guidance of the Executive Board, UNFPA continued to put into practice the long-standing commitment to coordination and collaboration in meeting the needs and priorities of all partner countries. The Executive Director noted that the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) pilot phase was an important part of those efforts. She stated that it was already clear that the UNDAF process facilitates a coordination of approach as regards data systems, situational analyses, monitoring and follow-up reporting to conferences. Overall, that would lead to a more solid basis for the formulation of programmes of assistance to a given country. The Executive Director observed that continued common attention was directed to issues related to national execution and the shared goal of strengthening national capacity. UNFPA had brought to the attention of

other members of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) lessons learned from its experience in that area.

3. Several delegations stated that the UNFPA report to the Economic and Social Council was clear and comprehensive. Delegations welcomed, in particular, the focus on the UNDAF, the United Nations resident coordinator system and the Fund's commitment to the United Nations reform process. A few delegations observed that the report should be more analytical. One delegation noted that the report should have more substance. Some delegations noted that additional information on the follow-up to the ICPD and progress achieved by the United Nations Development Group should also have been included.

4. One delegation, commending the analytical approach of the UNFPA report, noted that it captured the work of the Fund succinctly and comprehensively. The delegation added that the report clearly expressed the challenges and opportunities that UNFPA faced. The same delegation noted that the report should include more information on ICPD follow-up. The delegation also recommended that UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF should prepare, for submission to the upcoming session of the Economic and Social Council, a consolidated list of areas where intergovernmental action regarding funds and programmes was needed and would, the delegation noted, greatly assist delegations in structuring their comments for the triennial review of operational activities. The same delegation was pleased to note the importance accorded to the UNDG, the piloting phase of UNDAF and to the strengthening of the resident coordinator system. The delegation commended the measures undertaken to establish ownership of the system by participating agencies, including expanding the selection pool for resident coordinators and refining the terms of reference to ensure the greatest possible impartiality and neutrality; the secondment of staff from agencies other than UNDP to UNDG; greater harmonization of programming cycles and procedures; and increased use of common services and common premises. On the issue of financing for development, the delegation observed that alternatives to assessed or multi-year contributions should be explored, including a greater role for the private sector.

5. Another delegation, while welcoming the Fund's observations on the UNDAF process and noting their usefulness to the Economic and Social Council, noted that it was not fully satisfied with the report, which needed to be more analytical and less descriptive. The delegation observed that additional information on the follow-up to ICPD should have been included. Another delegation, noting that the report should be more problem-oriented, stated that it should include recommendations for action to be taken by the Council. The same delegation added that the report should include information on the Fund's relationship with the Bretton Woods institutions, and noted that there should be a recommendation from the Executive Board to the Council suggesting systematic reporting in the future on collaboration with these institutions. The delegation added that future reports should also contain a specific section on operational activities in the area of humanitarian assistance. Another delegation inquired about what could be done to increase collaboration with the Bretton Woods institutions.

6. Another delegation observed that the annual reports to the Economic and Social Council were particularly important because of the upcoming triennial

policy review of operational activities and the role that the Council played in that review. Noting the key role played by UNFPA in the follow-up to ICPD, the delegation stated that it would have liked the report to make reference to the ICPD+5 process. The delegation welcomed the Fund's efforts to increase national capacity-building and encouraged UNFPA to continue that work, which would help to ensure country ownership, programme sustainability and enhanced impact of United Nations development projects and programmes. The same delegation also welcomed the Fund's efforts to decentralize activities further to the field and noted that the Council needed to consider the question of the harmonization of overall system-wide decentralization, including that of the specialized agencies. On the subject of the Fund's enhanced collaboration with the Bretton Woods institutions, the delegation asked how the collegial relations with the institutions translated into policy and programming actions at the institutional and country levels. The delegation commended the progress made by UNFPA in promoting national execution. The delegation suggested including a discussion on the use of direct execution at a future Executive Board session. With regard to monitoring and evaluation, the delegation suggested that UNFPA adopt evaluation compliance reports which should be submitted to the Board for discussion, as was the case for UNDP. The delegation also inquired about the progress made in joint, strategic evaluations with other institutions, including the World Bank, as called for in General Assembly resolution 50/120.

7. One delegation, while expressing its appreciation for the activities being undertaken within the UNDAF, noted that even at that early stage it would like to see strong monitoring and evaluation of those activities. The same delegation drew attention to paragraph 5 of the UNFPA report and commended the Fund for succinctly delineating key areas in which further efforts were needed for strengthening the resident coordinator system. Another delegation also noted that it attached great importance to the UNDAF process and to strengthening collaboration among United Nations funds and programmes, the World Bank, donors and other development partners. It underscored the desirability of UNFPA focusing on its areas of comparative advantage.

8. Another delegation, while welcoming the Fund's commitment to the United Nations reform process, noted that the experience of UNDAF viewed from the perspective of UNDP appeared to be quite different from that of UNFPA. The delegation stated that it shared the concerns that had been expressed in the report of the Fund and asked to know more about the modalities being devised within the context of UNDG to address the problems encountered by small organizations such as UNFPA. The same delegation stated that it strongly supported the idea contained in paragraph 4 of the UNFPA report that the UNDAF exercise should not duplicate past programming efforts or require a review of processes that had already been completed.

9. One delegation noted that there were some concerns associated with the UNDAF and the UNDG. For example, the legal framework of the UNDG should be examined. With regard to the resident coordinator system, the delegation stated that the mode of the relationship with the host country should be delineated as some problems had been encountered in relations with counterparts. The delegation also inquired about the cost implications and cost-effectiveness of the UNDAF and about the relationship of the country strategy note (CSN), UNDAF

and the national planning framework. The delegation underscored that the national planning framework should not be diluted by the CSN and UNDAF.

10. Another delegation, expressing its appreciation for the information the Fund had provided regarding strengthening the resident coordinator system, noted that more information should be given on the harmonization of country programmes. The delegation added that the figures on resources in paragraphs 22-26 did not represent firm commitments. The delegation added that with reference to paragraph 15, additional information should have been included on the problems encountered in the Fund's technical support services (TSS) arrangements.

11. One delegation, while commending the report for being well prepared, stated that at a time when many developing countries were suffering economic hardships and their development efforts were being hampered, it was important to enhance and not diminish the role of UNFPA and UNDP. Noting that national execution should be both accelerated and taken more seriously, the delegation stated that there should be objective evaluations of national execution capability, and bureaucratic procedures within organizations should not be allowed to inhibit national execution.

12. Another delegation, while observing that the UNDAF and the resident coordinator system were good mechanisms and the core of the United Nations reform process, noted that ownership of the development process by programme countries should be fully respected. The same delegation commended the Fund for employing local experts in developing countries and stated that that policy should be fully implemented and national execution should be increased. The delegation expressed concern at the shortage of core resources and the consequences of that on UNFPA and UNDP programmes. The delegation urged donors to show greater corporate responsibility in that regard.

13. One delegation, speaking also on behalf of two others, noted that the reports to the Economic and Social Council should be focused and analytical documents and should point out areas where collaboration could be strengthened. The delegation added that the UNFPA report under consideration marked an improvement over past such reports in that it highlighted lessons learned. Another delegation also commended the Fund for having included various lessons learned in the report.

14. Another delegation noted that it shared the Fund's concerns expressed in paragraphs 5 and 6 of the report regarding strengthening the resident coordinator system to enable it to provide better coordination and effective support at the country level. Another delegation observed the importance of simplifying the programming process and avoiding another layer of bureaucracy.

15. One delegation noted that the reports to the Economic and Social Council should make some contribution towards addressing the poverty indicators of any country. Concomitantly, the reports should be more analytical. Recognizing that it may be difficult to cover a range of issues given the page limitation of the document, the delegation recommended selecting a few key issues and analysing them more thoroughly. The same delegation supported the Fund's adding resources for and mainstreaming HIV/AIDS prevention activities. The delegation

underscored the merit of UNDP and UNFPA preparing an additional one-page note delineating key issues that could be discussed by the Council at its upcoming session.

16. Another delegation agreed that a short note listing key issues pertaining to improved coordination of operational activities should be prepared for submission to the Economic and Social Council. The delegation suggested that such a note could be prepared by the UNDG. With regard to monitoring and evaluation, the same delegation asked for information on how the Fund's Office of Oversight and Evaluation (OOE) helped UNFPA in assessing programme experience and, in particular, whether the OOE drew out and synthesized lessons learned from evaluations and shared these with the rest of the Fund.

17. The Executive Director thanked the delegations for their constructive comments. She noted that the suggestion to submit a short list of key issues for consideration by the Economic and Social Council was a very useful one. She also agreed with the suggestion that the decentralization process was an important item for further discussion. She noted that UNFPA was issuing a letter to its field offices reminding them that they had decentralized authority within the limits of the approved country programme and subprogrammes. With regard to monitoring and evaluation, the Executive Director noted that many steps had been taken to harmonize these processes and that the issue was also being addressed by such system-wide mechanisms as the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) and an Inter-Agency Working Group on Evaluation. She agreed that joint evaluations were a good way of reviewing programmes and projects and that joint thematic evaluations needed to be carried out. On the topic of national capacity-building, the Executive Director observed that the Fund had put the item on the agenda of the UNDG. Also, at the annual session of the Board, the Fund would present a report on the absorptive capacity of programme countries. With regard to national execution, she underscored the importance of addressing the needs of national partners. The Executive Director noted that it was the Fund's goal to have full national execution; however, that required addressing various issues, including financial reporting and auditing in countries. She noted that additional information on the follow-up to ICPD could have been provided, but the Fund had sought to report on items that involved inter-agency collaboration.

18. With regard to the coordinated follow-up to conferences, the Executive Director noted that the recommendations of the three inter-agency task forces of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) had been adopted by CCPOQ and a letter from the Chair had been sent out to all concerned. She observed that further efforts were needed to increase utilization by the field offices of the outputs of the task forces. The Executive Director noted that in her meetings with resident coordinators she drew attention to the following key points: the centrality of the UNDAF process; the importance of a common data system; gender as a key issue around which the whole system could work; the usefulness of thematic groups not simply as forums for information exchange but as an important means of identifying programming gaps and duplications, as well as a venue for policy dialogue involving all development partners, including the Government and non-governmental organizations; the importance of policy and programme reviews involving all members of the United Nations country team; and

the key role of the resident coordinator system in promoting a coordinated follow-up to global conferences.

19. In responding to the comments and questions of delegations, the Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) underscored that UNFPA was firmly committed to the UNDAF and the resident coordinator system. He noted that the report to the Economic and Social Council had sought to identify areas that needed attention, notably through the UNDG process, including problems resulting from the dual responsibility of the United Nations Resident Coordinator also being the UNDP Resident Representative. The Deputy Executive Director stated that UNFPA was committed to the promotion of national execution of country programmes as evidenced by the increasing amount of resources being channelled through this execution modality, from 31 per cent of country programme resources in 1996 to 41 per cent in 1997. He added that the Fund's programming process was based on decentralized authority, which had evolved incrementally through a number of stages, including an initial pilot phase. He noted that full decentralization of programming authority required strengthening country offices in terms of staff and infrastructure, streamlining guidelines, training staff at country and headquarter levels, and improving management information systems. With regard to humanitarian assistance, the Deputy Executive Director observed that since the Governing Council had authorized the Fund to provide emergency assistance in 1994, UNFPA had been providing such assistance through executing agencies such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. On the subject of relations with the Bretton Woods institutions, he noted that UNFPA worked very closely with them on operational and policy matters. The Fund's Geographical Divisions regularly consulted with the World Bank to avoid duplications in programming and to identify gaps that could be addressed. The Fund also had technical consultations with the World Bank and would be a co-partner on reproductive-health training.

20. Responding to the query concerning the function of the UNFPA Office of Oversight and Evaluation, he noted that one main function of the OOE was to undertake thematic evaluations and synthesize the lessons learned. In addition, the OOE took into account other findings and lessons learned, for example, those deriving from audits and policy application reviews. The Deputy Executive Director (Policy and Administration) concluded by thanking delegations for their encouraging and constructive comments.

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DRAFT DECISION

98/xx. UNDP/UNFPA reports to the Economic and Social Council

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the reports to the Economic and Social Council (DP/1998/14 and DP/FPA/1998/2) and of the recommendations therein and decides to transmit them to the Economic and Social Council, together with the comments made by delegations and statements and answers given by the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme and the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund at the present session;

2. Calls on the Administrator and Executive Director to provide in future reports to the Economic and Social Council: a thorough analysis of problems encountered and lessons learned in the field; a focus on issues that will permit the Council to fulfil its coordinating role; and, in this context, to present relevant statistical data in a consolidated manner;

3. Invites the Administrator and Executive Director to consult with other members of the United Nations Development Group on a consolidated list of issues central to the improved coordination of operational activities for submission to and consideration by the Economic and Social Council during its 1998 substantive session;

4. Also invites the Economic and Social Council to recommend, at its 1998 substantive session, actions intended to increase the usefulness of these reports as inputs to the deliberations of the Economic and Social Council, as called for in General Assembly resolution 48/162, by inter alia, considering whether any issues in the current format are suitable for joint recommendations by the funds and programmes.

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DRAFT DECISION

98/xx. UNFPA Technical Support Services

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the Report on an Assessment of the Technical Support Services (TSS) Specialist Posts at Headquarters and Regional Levels (an independent evaluation report prepared for the United Nations Population Fund in 1997) and of the report of the Executive Director on the UNFPA technical support services system (DP/FPA/1997/16), submitted to the Executive Board at its third regular session 1997, and in light of Executive Board decision 97/27;

2. Authorizes the continued funding of the TSS specialist posts until 31 December 1999 as proposed in document DP/FPA/1997/16;

3. Requests the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund to continue actively to seek workable solutions to the concerns raised in the independent evaluation report in dialogue with partner organizations, in particular on coordination, accountability, the communication between the three levels of the system and advocacy function of TSS specialists in the partner organizations;

4. Also requests the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund to submit at the second regular session 1999 a brief progress report on the effectiveness of the improvements that have been implemented in the operation of the TSS system since the third regular session 1997;

5. Invites the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund, in light of the recommendations arising from the ICPD+5 process and in consultation with partner agencies, to develop future options for (a) providing specialist support and advice to country support teams and country programmes through arrangements that utilize the best expertise available within the United Nations system and from other sources and (b) enhancing the involvement and contribution of relevant United Nations specialized agencies in taking forward and promoting the ICPD agenda;

6. Requests the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund to present these proposals in a report, including an analysis of the financial and budgetary aspects, to the Executive Board at its third regular session in 1999.

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Agenda item 8

DRAFT DECISION

98/xx. Resource mobilization strategy for the United Nations Population Fund

The Executive Board

1. Takes note of the report of the Executive Director on Mobilizing Resources Now and for the Future: UNFPA's Strategy (DP/FPA/1998/CRP.2);

2. Invites the Executive Director to update the conference room paper on Mobilizing Resources Now and for the Future: UNFPA's Strategy (DP/FPA/1998/CRP.2) and to report to the Executive Board at its annual session 1998;

3. Requests the Executive Director to organize informal intersessional meetings of the Board with a view to reviewing various funding mechanisms for the United Nations Population Fund and also requests the Executive Director to report to the Board at upcoming Board meetings on progress made in the informal intersessional meetings with a view to adopting at its third regular session 1998 a decision on a sustainable funding strategy that will place the funding of the United Nations Population Fund on a predictable, assured and continuous basis so as to enable it to play a central role in the follow-up to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development.

April 1998